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10/661,877

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Peter McCullagh

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EXAMINER

CARTER, CANDICE D

ART UNIT

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3629

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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 10/661,877	<b>Applicant(s)</b> MCCULLAGH ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> CANDICE D. CARTER	<b>Art Unit</b> 3629	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

#### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

#### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 May 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

#### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7,9,11-24 and 26-38 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-7,9,11-24 and 26-38 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

#### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 11 September 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

#### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \*    c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

#### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)          | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)           |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____                                      |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)          | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____  | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____                          |

### **DETAILED ACTION**

The following is a Second Non-Final Office Action in response to communications received on March 27, 2008. Claims 8, 10, 25, and 31-32 have been cancelled. Claims 1, 9, 17, 23, 26, 28, and 35 have been amended. No claims have been added. Therefore, Claims 1-7, 9, 11-24, and 26-38 are pending and have been addressed below.

#### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

**2. Claims 1-7, 9, 12-30, and 33-38 rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hack et al. (2003/0187675) in view of SAP.com (2002).**

As per claim 1, Hack et al. discloses "A method comprising:  
receiving user-specified information pertaining to one or more business challenges of an organization" (pg. 3, col. 1, ¶ 23; via user may select a business goal such as "reducing operating costs or "lowering working capital" where these business goals are also business challenges);

"identifying one or more predefined business processes that address the one or more business challenges of the organization" (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 21; identification of value-added business processes and/or strategies);

“and recommending the one or more predefined business processes to a user” (pg. 3. col. 1, ¶ 23; producing a short list of relevant and value adding business processes where producing a list of business processes is the same as recommending processes specific to a particular business challenge).

Hack et al., however, fails to explicitly disclose “estimating benefits that are to be gained by the organization when the one or more business challenges are successfully addressed and communicating the benefits to the user” and “assessing an adoption level of an automated technology by the organization based on the one or more business challenges and the industry and revenue data”.

SAP.com discloses a value calculator that “estimates benefits that are to be gained by the organization when the one or more business challenges are successfully addressed” and “assesses an adoption level of an automated technology by the organization based on the one or more business challenges and the industry and revenue data” (SAP Value Calculators; ¶ 2 and 3; via estimate how much your company can benefit in a 12-month period by taking the next step, where taking the next step includes implementing the SAP products and via value calculators determine your “stage of excellence” by assessing your company’s industry, financial performance, and e-business maturity information and also calculates how much additional value you can realize by improving your e-business infrastructure, where the e-business would be improving the infrastructure by using one of SAP’s automated technologies).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the pertinent art at the time the invention was made to modify the business process valuation tool of

Hack et al. to include the estimation and value calculator as taught by SAP because it would provide another way for the user to determine the best process to implement in their company and to evaluate the usefulness of the implementation.

Claims 17, 23 and 26 recite equivalent limitations to claim 1 and are therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as set forth above.

As per claim 2, Hack et al. discloses “communicating to the user a list of business challenges commonly experienced by a plurality of companies” (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 20; via identify market forces associated with the selected industry sector which may include tight labor markets, shift toward a retail demand focus, and rapidly shifting consumer preferences, where these market forces are challenges that are commonly experienced by a plurality of companies. Specific case examples may also be provided by the system);

“receiving a user-specified ranking of an organization performance with respect to each business challenge in the list” (pg. 3, col.1, ¶ 24; via user may rank relative importance of each business scenario, where the business scenarios are generated by the system based on business challenges);

“and considering the user-specified ranking when identifying the one or more predefined business processes” (pg. 3, col. 1. ¶ 24; via rankings of importance may help define a set of strategies and/ or processes).

Claims 18, 24, and 25 recite equivalent limitations to claim 2 and are therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as set forth above.

As per claim 3, Hack et al. discloses “receiving user-specified information indicating importance of business challenges within the list to the organization” (pg. 3, col. 1, ¶ 24; via user may rank relative importance of each business scenario, where the business scenarios are generated by the system based on business challenges so the business challenges are ranked along with the associated business scenario);

“And considering the importance of the business challenges when identifying the one or more predefined business processes” (pg. 3, col. 1. ¶ 24; via rankings of importance may help define a set of strategies and/ or processes).

Claim 19 recites equivalent limitations to claim 3 and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as set forth above.

As per claim 4, Hack et al. discloses “the list of commonly experienced business challenges is specific to a one of a plurality of functions that is selected by the user for evaluation” (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 20; via industry analysis may include defining participants in terms of their function or role. Participants may include a manufacturer, supplier, retailer, etc. The industry analysis identifies market forces associated with each function or role. Users may choose to view the analysis that is associated with their specific function or role).

Claim 20 recites equivalent limitations to claim 4 and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as set forth above.

As per claim 5, Hack et al. discloses “maintaining a database of commonly experiences business challenges associated with the plurality of functions” (Hack pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 20; via The information and/or analysis may be derived from databases and

other such sources and pg. 2, col. 1, ¶ 17; via A database may be used by the host servers to store and retrieve information related to the operation of the host servers which includes the execution of the strategic management system).

As per claim 6, Hack et al. discloses “maintaining a database of commonly experiences business challenges associated with specific industries” (Hack pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 20; via The information and/or analysis may be derived from databases and other such sources and pg. 2, col. 1, ¶ 17; via A database may be used by the host servers to store and retrieve information related to the operation of the host servers which includes the execution of the strategic management system).

As per claim 7, Hack et al. discloses “requesting the user to enter industry and revenue data associated with the organization” (pg. 2, col. 1; via allow the user to enter information related to the industry that is of interest to the user and pg. 4, col. 1, ¶ 33; via requiring user to enter financial information such as annual revenue, on hand inventory, sales, general and administration expenses).

As per claim 9, Hack et al. discloses all of the elements of the claimed invention but fails to explicitly disclose “the automated technology is at least one of customer relationship management (CRM), partner relationship management (PRM), and employee relationship management (ERM)”.

SAP.com discloses “automated customer relationship management (CRM) technology” (my SAP Customer Relationship Management; this section gives a description of SAP’s automated CRM technology that they offer to their customers).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the pertinent art at the time the invention was made to modify the business process valuation tool of Hack et al. to include the automated CRM technology as taught by SAP.com because CRM is a very prominent e-business solution that will contribute to the thriving business of a company if implemented.

As per claim 12, Hack et al. discloses “displaying to the user each of the one or more business challenges with at least one of the one or more predefined business processes that addresses said each of the one or more business challenges” (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 20; via the system may also display solutions/responses to certain of the identified market factors, where the identified market factors are the business challenges and the solutions/responses are the predefined business processes that addresses the business challenges).

Claim 21 and 27 recite equivalent limitations to claim 12 and are therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as set forth above.

As per claim 13, Hack et al. discloses “allowing the user to view detailed business process information for the at least one of the one or more predefined business processes” (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 22; via the user may select for further analysis one or more strategies and/or processes from a list of strategies and/or processes recommended by the system where the user will further describe the business strategies chosen by the user).

Claim 22 recites equivalent limitations to claim 13 and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as set forth above.



As per claim 14, Hack et al. discloses “identifying a software product required to implement each of the one or more predefined business processes” (pg. 3, col. 1, ¶ 26; via the system may identify software products).

As per claim 15, Hack discloses “mapping each of the one or more predefined business processes to a corresponding best practice strategy recommendation and a corresponding best practice functionality recommendation” (pg. 2, col. 1, ¶ 16; via a list of business scenarios relevant to user, proposed business strategies and objectives, proposed products and services that meet the business strategies and objectives, where the business scenarios include the business processes and the products and services are the functionality recommendations provided by the system);

“And allowing the user to view the corresponding best practice strategy recommendation and the corresponding best practice functionality recommendation” (pg. 2, col. 1, ¶ 16; via assist a user in analyzing, where the user must be able to view the recommendations in order for the system to assist them).

As per claim 16, Hack et al. discloses “allowing the user to view performance metrics associated with the one or more predefined business processes” (pg. 1, col. 2, ¶ 9; via provided with a quantitative value that includes metrics, where the performance metrics are associated with the business processes that the participant has determined to be relevant and value-adding);

“and allowing the user to view a success story of a customer who has implemented at least one of the one or more predefined business processes” (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 20; via analysis may also provide case examples, where the case examples would

include success stories of other firms pursuing industry trends that have been presented by the system).

As per claim 28, Hack et al. discloses “A system comprising:  
a memory; and at least one processor coupled to the memory” (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 18; via computer device, where a computer is a system comprising a memory and a processor),

“the processor executing a set of instructions which cause the processor to receive user-specified information pertaining to one or more business challenges of an organization” (pg. 3, col. 1, ¶ 23; via user may select a business goal such as “reducing operating costs or “lowering working capital” where these business goals are also business challenges),

“identify one or more predefined business processes that address the one or more business challenges of the organization (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 21; identification of value-added business processes and/or strategies);

“and recommending the one or more predefined business processes to a user” (pg. 3, col. 1, ¶ 23; producing a short list of relevant and value adding business processes, where producing a list of business processes is the same as recommending processes specific to a particular business challenge).

Hack et al., however, fails to explicitly disclose “estimating benefits that are to be gained by the organization when the one or more business challenges are successfully addressed and communicating the benefits to the user” and “assessing an adoption

level of an automated technology by the organization based on the one or more business challenges and the industry and revenue data”.

SAP.com discloses a value calculator that “estimates benefits that are to be gained by the organization when the one or more business challenges are successfully addressed” and “assesses an adoption level of an automated technology by the organization based on the one or more business challenges and the industry and revenue data” (SAP Value Calculators; ¶ 2 and 3; via estimate how much your company can benefit in a 12-month period by taking the next step, where taking the next step includes implementing the SAP products and via value calculators determine your “stage of excellence” by assessing your company’s industry, financial performance, and e-business maturity information and also calculates how much additional value you can realize by improving your e-business infrastructure, where the e-business would be improving the infrastructure by using one of SAP’s automated technologies).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the pertinent art at the time the invention was made to modify the business process valuation tool of Hack et al. to include the estimation and value calculator as taught by SAP because it would provide another way for the user to determine the best process to implement in their company and to evaluate the usefulness of the implementation.

Claim 35 recites equivalent limitations to claim 28 and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as set forth above.

As per claim 29, Hack et al. discloses “the processor is to receive user-specified information pertaining to one or more business challenges of an organization by

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communicating to the user a list of business challenges commonly experienced by a plurality of companies” (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 20; via identify market forces associated with the selected industry sector which may include tight labor markets, shift toward a retail demand focus, and rapidly shifting consumer preferences, where these market forces are challenges that are commonly experienced by a plurality of companies. Specific case examples may also be provided by the system);

“receiving a user-specified ranking of an organization performance with respect to each business challenge in the list” (pg. 3, col.1, ¶ 24; via user may rank relative importance of each business scenario, where the business scenarios are generated by the system based on business challenges);

“and considering the user-specified ranking when identifying the one or more predefined business processes” (pg. 3, col. 1. ¶ 24; via rankings of importance may help define a set of strategies and/or processes).

Claim 36 recites equivalent limitations to claim 29 and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as set forth above.

As per claim 30, Hack et al. discloses “receiving user-specified information indicating importance of business challenges within the list to the organization” (pg. 3, col. 1, ¶ 24; via user may rank relative importance of each business scenario where the business scenarios are generated by the system based on business challenges so the business challenges are ranked along with the associated business scenario);

“And considering the importance of the business challenges when identifying the one or more predefined business processes” (pg. 3, col. 1, ¶ 24; via rankings of importance may help define a set of strategies and/ or processes).

As per claim 33, Hack et al. discloses “displaying to the user each of the one or more business challenges with at least one of the one or more predefined business processes that addresses said each of the one or more business challenges” (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 20; via the system may also display solutions/responses to certain of the identified market factors, where the identified market factors are the business challenges and the solutions/responses are the predefined business processes that addresses the business challenges).

Claim 37 recites equivalent limitations to claim 33 and is therefore rejected using the same art and rationale as set forth above.

As per claim 34, Hack et al. discloses “map each of the one or more predefined business processes to a corresponding best practice strategy recommendation and a corresponding best practice functionality recommendation” (pg. 2, col. 1, ¶ 16; via a list of business scenarios relevant to user, proposed business strategies and objectives, proposed products and services that meet the business strategies and objectives, where the business scenarios are the business processes and the products and services are the functionality recommendations provided by the system),

“and to allow the user to view the corresponding best practice strategy recommendation and the corresponding best practice functionality recommendation”

(pg. 2, col. 1, ¶ 16; via assist a user in analyzing, where the user must be able to view the recommendations in order for the system to assist them).

As per claim 38, Hack et al. discloses “allow the user to view detailed best practice information for the at least one of the one or more best practices” (pg. 2, col. 2, ¶ 22; via the user may select for further analysis one or more strategies and/or processes from a list of strategies and/or processes recommended by the system where the user will further describe the business strategies chosen by the user).

**3. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hack et al. as applied to claims 1 and 28 above in view of Spangenberg et al. (US 2004/0260585).**

As per claim 11, Hack et al. discloses all of the elements of the claimed invention but fails to explicitly disclose “wherein the benefits are estimated using statistical data”.

Spangenberg discloses a method and apparatus for measuring benefits of business improvements that “estimates benefits using statistical data” (pg. 4, col. 1, ¶ 33; via profit analysis over a same time period length using estimated performance information, where an analysis using estimated performance data is statistical in nature because of the fact that it is estimated).

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the pertinent art at the time the invention was made to modify the business process valuation tool of Hack et al. to include the “estimate of benefits using statistical data” as taught by Spangenberg et al. because the estimating of benefits will ultimately aid the user in

determining which business process will be of most value to their company if implemented.

### ***Response to Arguments***

4. Applicant's arguments, see Pg. 9, filed March 27, 2008, with respect to recitation: "estimating benefits that are to be gained by the organization when the one or more business challenges are successfully addressed" in amended claims 1, 17, 26, 28, and 35. However, upon further consideration, a new ground(s) of rejection is made in view of SAP.com. Please see the rejections of these claims listed above.

Applicant's arguments with respect to the recitation: "assessing an adoption level of an automated technology by the organization based on the one or more business challenges and the industry and revenue data" in amended claims 1, 17, 26, 28, and 35 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. Applicant has failed to explicitly state why the cited prior art does not anticipate the claimed limitation. In the arguments filed March 27, 2008, in pg. 18, Applicant states "what is being assessed in SAP.com is a company's industry, financial performance, and e-business maturity information". Examiner respectfully disagrees. SAP.com uses this information to determine the "stage of excellence" and to assess how much the company can benefit from using the software (see SAP Value Calculators).

In response to applicant's argument that there is no suggestion to combine the references, the examiner recognizes that obviousness can only be established by combining or modifying the teachings of the prior art to produce the claimed invention where there is some teaching, suggestion, or motivation to do so found either in the

references themselves or in the knowledge generally available to one of ordinary skill in the art. See *In re Fine*, 837 F.2d 1071, 5 USPQ2d 1596 (Fed. Cir. 1988) and *In re Jones*, 958 F.2d 347, 21 USPQ2d 1941 (Fed. Cir. 1992). In this case, the motivation to combine Hack and SAP.com is such that with the addition of the value calculators taught by SAP.com, the business valuation tool of Hack et al. will be able to estimate the value that will be realized from the implementation of any new business process.

In response to arguments in reference to claims 2-7, 9, 11-16, 18-22, 24, 27, 29, 30, 33, 34, and 36-38, all rejections made towards the dependent claims are maintained due to the lack of a sufficient reply in regards to distinctly and specifically pointing out the supposed errors in the examiner's action in the prior Office Action (37 CFR 1.111 ).

### ***Conclusion***

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Cooperman et al. (US 2003/0115191) discloses a content provider for customer relationship management or other applications. Sanders et al. (US 2004/0249688) discloses a global integrated improvement planning tool. Hutchins et al. (US 7,246,074) discloses a system and method for identifying skills and tools needed to support a process utilizing pre-defined templates. Walsh et al. (US 2003/0233249) discloses a method and system for enterprise business process management. Young (US 2002/0038217) discloses a system and method for integrated data analysis and management.



Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to CANDICE D. CARTER whose telephone number is (571) 270-5105. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday thru Thursday 7:30am- 6:00pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Weiss can be reached on (571) 272-6812. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/C. D. C./  
Examiner, Art Unit 3629

/John G. Weiss/  
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3629